NewsRelease

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NOTE TO EDITORS: APOLLO 11 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Langley's Contribution to Lunar Landing Available On Videotape, Photos

In his 1961 address to a joint session of Congress, President Kennedy proposed putting a man on the moon before 1970. Within a few years of that incredible announcement, NASA Langley Research Center would create the way and the means.

Langley researchers devised the lunar-orbit rendezvous (LOR) concept that was as important as the Saturn V rocket in enabling a manned lunar landing. Langley also built training simulators for Apollo astronauts to practice landing on the moon.

Two major simulation facilities designed, built and operated by Langley were used to prepare for rendezvous and landing. The Rendezvous and Docking Simulator enabled pilots of both the Lunar Excursion Module (LEM) and command module to fly scale-model vehicles in a three-dimensional environment. Later, astronauts prepared for the final 150-foot descent to the moon's surface at the Lunar Landing Research Facility (LLRF). In addition, the Reduced Gravity Simulator, part of the larger LLRF, simulated one-sixth gravity astronauts would encounter during moonwalks.

A 15-Minute BETA-SP Apollo 11 highlights resource tape, print materials, and photographs are available via the NASA Langley Research Center. Please direct requests and questions to Chris Rink at (757) 864-6786.

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Archive footage filmed at NASA Langley includes a LEM and command module docking sequence; the LEM research prototype and trainer landing at the Lunar Landing Research Facility; Neil Armstrong standing in front of the LEM; a man walking in simulated one-sixth gravity; an Apollo capsule model being tested at the Vertical Spin Tunnel and splashing down in the Hydrodynamics Research Facility.

The footage also features recent interviews with Dr. John C. Houbolt, former Chief Aeronautical Scientist, and Lee Person, a retired research pilot from NASA Langley Research Center. Houbolt discusses how he and other Langley researchers and engineers were the first in NASA to identify the advantages of lunar orbit rendezvous over other alternatives. Person talks about flying the LEM simulator and training Apollo astronauts on it at Langley's LLRF.

The footage concludes with President Kennedy's speech to a joint session of Congress in which he declares "that this nation should commit itself" to landing a man on the moon, and Apollo 11 mission highlights.

Two Langley fact sheets, "NASA Langley Research Center's Contributions to the Apollo Program" and "The Rendezvous That Was Almost Missed: Lunar Orbit Rendezvous and the Apollo Program" are available to members of the news media.

Also available are photographs featuring Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin with Langley's Lunar Landing Research Vehicle, a young Walter Cronkite harnessed in Langley's Reduced Gravity Simulator, a model of the Saturn V and its launch tower in a Langley wind tunnel, a multiple-exposure image of a 1967 LLRV night test and the well-known Apollo 17 photograph of the full earth.

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